(d) if so, the remedial measures proposed to be taken to improve the functioning of the labour courts?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (d) As per the information received from the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, there were 23,284 Industrial Disputes and 16,342 Applications pending upto February, 1997 in the Industrial Tribunals & Labour Courts set up by them. There are 5 vacancies of Presiding Officers, Labour Courts for which offer of appointments have since been issued. In the past, a few judicial officers to whom offer of appointments as Presiding Officer of Labour Courts were issued, had declined the same reportedly asking for more facilities. A Presiding Officer of Industrial Tribunal and Labour Court is being provided facilities similar to the ones available to their counterparts in their parent cadre. The Government of India has also requested the state Government of Delhi to look into the matter for initiating remedial measures.

Pending Passport cases in Punjab

*478. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passport applications pending with the Passport Offices in Punjab as on the 31st March, 1997;

(b) the number of passports issued by the said offices during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) whether Government propose to open new Passport Offices in Punjab keeping in view the increasing number of passport applications;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) to (e) The number of passport applications pending with the Passport Offices in Punjab as on the 31st March, 1997 was:

	Total pendency	Pendency over a month
(a) Chandigarh	6474	Nil
(b) Jalandhar	17209	6329

2. The number of passports issued by Regional Passport Office, Jalandhar during the last three years is given below:

Name of office	1994	1995	1996
Regional Passport Office, Chandigarh	95236	103257	98946
Passport Office, Jalandhar	111002	100743	95667

3. The Standing Committee of Parliament for External Affairs has stated that apart from other reasons, there must be at least 50,000 applications per annum from an area before a new Passport Office is to be opened. At present, in addition to the two Passport Offices at Chandigarh and Jalandhar, a Collection Centre is also functioning at Amritsar. The Passport Office at Chandigarh has already been computerised and steps are under way to computerise the Passport office at Jalandhar. With this in view, there is no proposal to open any new Passport Office in Punjab.